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LETTER DATED 17 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

In accordance with instructions I have received, I would like to request you to circulate the texts of the enclosed appeal to the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Boris N. Yeltsin, issued by the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of Azerbaijan on 14 March 1997 (annex I) and the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijan Republic on 15 March 1997 as documents of the Security Council (annex II).

(Signed) Eldar G. KOULIEV
Permanent Representative

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Annex I

[Original: Russian]

Appeal of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan to the President of the Russian Federation, adopted at a meeting of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan on 14 March 1997

On 4 March 1997, the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of Azerbaijan made an appeal to the State Duma of the Russian Federation regarding illegal deliveries of Russian arms to Armenia.

This matter was raised in an appeal addressed to you by the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Heydar Aliyev. Other official circles of Azerbaijan also sent appeals to various State bodies of the Russian Federation. Although these facts have been confirmed by a number of reliable sources, the Russian side has stubbornly refuted the claim that it is providing military assistance to Armenia but has not adduced any evidence to the contrary. However, the Russian media recently confirmed that these refutations are completely contrary to the facts. The adoption of official measures to investigate the matter demonstrates the gravity of the situation. Such an incomprehensible position on the part of certain ruling circles of the Russian Federation is seriously damaging Azerbaijani-Russian relations and is also casting doubts on the objectivity and sincerity of the Russian Federation in its capacity as co-chairman of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

A letter dated 28 February 1997 from the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, Mr. Igor Rodionov, addressed to the Minister of the Russian Federation for Cooperation with the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Mr. Aman Tuleyev, confirmed the delivery to Armenia, without charge, over the period 1994-1996, of armoured vehicles, namely, 84 T-72 tanks and 50 armoured personnel carriers valued at 271 billion roubles. The Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation also pointed out that the military equipment was provided by the Ministry of Defence without appropriate authorization from the Government of the Russian Federation.

The Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan once again declares that the delivery of military equipment to Armenia constitutes a gross violation by Armenia of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and the Armenian side's denial of these facts is yet another manifestation of Armenia's usual double-dealing policy and false propaganda, and once again reveals the true face of the aggressor.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly drawn attention to evidence that the Russian Federation is providing Armenia with various kinds of military assistance. This evidence has now been confirmed by two ministers of the Russian Federation, and the delivery, over an extended period of time, of arms in such large quantities and on such a broad scale, from the territory of the Russian Federation to Armenia, allegedly without the Russian Government's consent, gives rise to well-founded doubts not only among the general public of Azerbaijan but also of the Russian Federation.

It is outrageous that military equipment was delivered to Armenia during the period 1994-1996, when a ceasefire between Azerbaijan and Armenia was in effect. Armenia's rapid build-up of its military potential dims hopes for a peaceful solution of the conflict. Armenia, which has occupied 20 per cent of Azerbaijani territory and expelled 1 million Azerbaijani civilians from their homes, on the one hand portrays itself to world public opinion as an advocate of a negotiated settlement of the question while, on the other, it is building up its military potential by acquiring the most advanced weapons. Clearly, a peaceful settlement of the conflict is not to the liking of Armenia and certain circles in the Russian Federation.

It is surprising that, while there is no Russian population in Armenia and while approximately half a million Russians live in Azerbaijan, Armenia is being supplied with offensive weapons with the capacity to destroy the entire territory of Azerbaijan, thus endangering the lives of the entire population (including half a million Russians). The arming of Armenia on such a large scale and the sharp build-up of its military might in violation of international legal norms, at a time when relations between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation are improving and steadily developing, poses a real threat to the entire region. These facts should be a source of serious concern to world public opinion. Russian arms were delivered to Armenia in violation of well-known United Nations and OSCE resolutions that demand that no military equipment be delivered to the States involved in the conflict.

In order to maintain Azerbaijani-Russian relations, the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan demands that the leaders of the Russian State ensure the return, under the supervision of international organizations, of the arms that were illegally delivered to Armenia, prevent the repetition of such deliveries and seriously punish the guilty parties.

The Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan, expressing the hope that these incidents will not damage the traditionally friendly relations between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, assures the people of the Russian Federation that Azerbaijan will not swerve from its policy of fostering good-neighbourly relations with the Russian Federation. At the same time, the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan considers it its duty to express its gratitude to the ministers of the Russian Federation and the deputies of the State Duma who have taken pains to publish the facts concerning the illegal delivery of Russian arms to Armenia.

(At its meeting on 14 March 1997, the Milli Majlis adopted similar appeals to the Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Mr. E. S. Stroev, and to the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Mr. G. N. Seleznev.)

Annex II

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 15 March 1997 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan

On 13 March 1997, the mass media of the Russian Federation reported that the Russian Minister of Defence, Mr. Igor Rodionov, in a letter dated 28 February 1997 addressed to the Minister of the Russian Federation for Cooperation with the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Mr. Aman Tuleyev, confirmed that deliveries of Russian military equipment had been made to Armenia; such deliveries were unauthorized by the Government and hence illegal. The illegal delivery, without charge, of Russian military equipment to Armenia was also confirmed by the Chief Military Prosecutor of the Russian Federation, Mr. Valentin Panichev, who announced that an investigation into the matter was in progress.

It is clear from the letter of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation and the statement made by the Chief Military Prosecutor of the Russian Federation that armoured vehicles - 84 T-72 tanks and 50 armoured personnel carriers and spare parts for them - valued at approximately 280 billion Russian roubles were delivered to Armenia illegally, secretly and without charge in 1994-1996.

In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan deems it necessary to state the following:

Armenia, which has seized 20 per cent of Azerbaijani territory and expelled more than 1 million Azerbaijanis from their homes, and which constantly accuses Azerbaijan of being unwilling to resolve the conflict through peaceful means, has in fact not halted and continues through all illegal means to build up its military potential, which is a gross violation of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which regulates the admissible levels of conventional weapons for the countries parties to the Treaty.

Armenia began to take significant measures to build up its military potential after an agreement on a ceasefire was reached on 12 May 1994. Unlike Azerbaijan, which has opted for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, the duplicity of Armenia, whose words are at variance with its deeds, is becoming increasingly obvious.

Armenia's illegal actions clearly contradict United Nations and OSCE decisions on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, and well-known United Nations Security Council resolutions, which call for the immediate cessation of military deliveries to the States parties to the conflict, since such deliveries further escalate the conflict and facilitate the continued occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan notes with satisfaction that there is a growing tendency in the Russian Federation to place State interests

above the narrow interests of individual groups, particularly lobbyists for Armenian interests, who seek to counterbalance Russian-Azerbaijani relations by exploiting opportunities in the Russian Federation in order to serve Armenia's selfish interests. The deliveries to Armenia of military equipment and spare parts for them, which were unauthorized by the Government of the Russian Federation, have provoked a negative response on the part of a number of Russian officials and have become the subject of special deliberations in the State Duma of the Russian Federation, which has instructed its main committees - on defence, security, and CIS and ties with fellow citizens - to conduct a thorough investigation.

The illegal delivery of Russian military equipment to Armenia also demonstrates that there are forces in the Russian Federation and Armenia that have no interest in a political settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict or the development of bilateral Russian-Azerbaijani relations. These forces are seeking to diminish the prestige of the Russian Federation in the Transcaucasian region and of the Russian Co-Chairman of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); their objective is to undermine the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses the hope that the leaders of the Russian Federation will instruct the competent Russian authorities to conduct an objective investigation into the illegal deliveries of military equipment to Armenia, which will result in the exposure of the officials involved in these illegal activities, an appropriate legal and political assessment of such activities, and the return to the Russian Federation of all military equipment illegally delivered to Armenia. The activities of persons guided primarily by their own selfish interests, have damaged, and continue to damage, the Russian Federation's role as a peacemaking State, its policy in the Transcaucasian region, in particular in Azerbaijan, its efforts to mediate a settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, and bilateral Russian-Azerbaijani relations.

Azerbaijan appeals to all States parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to take appropriate measures to put an end to the systematic violation of the Treaty by Armenia, which is seeking to alter the existing balance of power in the conflict area and to solve the problem by military means. The quantities of the arms and military equipment that have been illegally imported into the territory of Armenia and which exceed the level established by the Treaty should be made public, and such arms and equipment should be confiscated and exported from Armenia and the Armenian-occupied territories of Azerbaijan. To this end, Azerbaijan calls for the conduct, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, of comprehensive and full-scale inspections both in the territory of Armenia and in the Armenian-occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan appeals to the countries members of the Minsk Group of OSCE to condemn the policy of Armenia, which is secretly and illegally building up its military potential and subverting the efforts of the Minsk Group, and to call upon Armenia to engage in a constructive dialogue on the basis of the principles of the Lisbon Summit.

Azerbaijan wishes to draw the attention of the countries of the region - Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Georgia - which, like Azerbaijan, have a common border with Armenia, to the fact that Armenia's actions pose a threat to peace and stability in the region.

Azerbaijan also appeals to the countries members of CIS that signed the Treaty on Collective Security, to which Armenia is a party, to call upon Armenia to adhere strictly to the obligations it assumed as a member of the Commonwealth and a party to the Treaty on Collective Security. Armenia is the only CIS country that has not recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and it does not disguise its territorial claims on Azerbaijan. Armenia's policy, which openly flouts the principles on which CIS is based, poses a threat to the viability and effectiveness of the Commonwealth.

Armenia should realize that the conflict cannot be settled through a build-up of military potential. This is a hopeless path, which will lead to a further escalation of the crisis. It should today be clear to everyone, including Armenia, that there is no alternative but to accept the principles for a settlement of the conflict proclaimed at the Lisbon Summit of OSCE, and which were supported by all members of OSCE. Negotiations on a political settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict must be resumed and the illegal militarization of Armenia must be halted.

For its part, Azerbaijan reaffirms its commitment to a political settlement and its readiness to continue peace negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Group of OSCE and on the basis of the principles adopted at the Lisbon Summit.